

May 15, 2006

Ms. Sally Wisely, State Director  
Colorado Office-Bureau of Land Management  
United States Department of the Interior  
2850 Youngfield St  
Lakewood, CO 80215

Dear Director Wisely:

I am again writing to express my grave concerns about the Bureau of Land Management's decision to go forward with the lease sale of thousands of acres within and adjoining the watersheds for the City of Grand Junction and the Town of Palisade. Your agency's decision was made over the strong objections and legitimate concerns voiced by those communities. I share those concerns, and I am once again asking you to withdraw these parcels until adequate assurances are provided to these communities as to the future safety of their water supply.

Watershed protection is obviously a primary concern for communities on Colorado's West Slope. If the lease sale goes forward, 70% of Palisade's watershed, including land around the city's spring and reservoir, will be available for oil and gas exploration and production with all the associated risks to water quality.

Based on the concerns expressed by the City of Grand Junction and the Town of Palisade, I am not satisfied that the BLM has adequately addressed my concerns or those of the communities affected.

The protection of community watersheds is too important for any government entity to risk unnecessarily. Withdrawing the parcels, and taking the time to work with the communities impacted to ensure adequate agreement and protections is a reasonable and responsible approach, and one I strongly urge you and your agency to take.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

  
Ken Salazar  
US Senator

Enclosures (2)